



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**2016 COLLEGE CHANGES EVERYTHING™ CONFERENCE: ALIGNING COLLEGE ATTAINMENT AND EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH**

**July 21<sup>st</sup> Conference Offers Innovative Strategies for Promoting College Access and Success**

CHICAGO – As Illinois enters the new fiscal year with ongoing budget uncertainty, it is critical that educators, policy makers, and others focused on higher education come together to collaborate on a path to success for Illinois students. The economic future of the state is inextricably tied to the strength of its workforce—in itself dependent in large part on higher education here in Illinois. Join Illinois educators, government, business and non-profit leaders, other professionals and students at the Sixth Annual [College Changes Everything™ Conference](#) on July 21<sup>st</sup> in Tinley Park for a day of learning, discussion, and sharing of resources to support collaborative efforts to improve college access and completion and forge a better future for Illinois.

“One of the things this conference will showcase are some of the great regional examples of collaboration among educators, business and industry, governments and non-profits -- all working together to make sure that students are getting the education they need to find jobs and meet workforce needs,” said Eric Zarnikow, executive director of the [Illinois Student Assistance Commission](#) (ISAC), the sponsor of the conference. “To be successful, these efforts require alignment among the different levels of education, as well as stronger engagement with employers to ensure that they play a larger role in student success. I look forward to learning from people who have been part of this kind of effort and have seen positive results for students and for local economies.”

This year’s keynote speakers are John M. Burnett, President and CEO of the Community Education Coalition (CEC), and Jack Hess, executive director of the Institute for Coalition Building. Burnett and Hess will share how the city of Columbus, Indiana collectively addressed complex social problems and produced meaningful outcomes. The community’s narrative unpacks the concept of collective impact by demonstrating both its principles and its practices for transforming a social system by ultimately cultivating the relationships among people who shape those systems.

The 2016 CCE Conference will be held at the Tinley Park Convention Center in Tinley Park, Illinois on Thursday, July 21 from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The registration fee of \$40 includes a light breakfast, lunch, and all conference materials. For more information or to register online, visit [2016 CCE Conference](#).

The CCE Conference is a collaborative effort of volunteers including its sponsor, ISAC, as well as the Illinois Board of Higher Education, Illinois Community College Board, Illinois Department of Commerce

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and Economic Opportunity, Illinois State Board of Education, Illinois College Access Network, Federation of Independent Illinois Colleges and Universities, Advance Illinois, Center for the Study of Education Policy at Illinois State University, Council for Adult and Experiential Learning, Education Systems Center at Northern Illinois University, Generations Serving Generations, ACT Now, and Women Employed.

Join us on social media with the 2016 CCE Conference hashtag: #CCE4me

#### About College Changes Everything

Sponsored by the Illinois Student Assistance Commission and its partners, College Changes Everything™ (CCE) is a college access movement that recognizes that college can be a life changing experience not only for students, but also for families and communities. In Illinois and across the nation, those who obtain education beyond high school not only see a significant impact on their potential career prospects and future salary, but also change levels of poverty, life expectancy, crime and obesity rates in their communities. The CCE movement supports the Illinois goal of increasing the proportion of adults in Illinois with high-quality degrees and credentials to 60% by the year 2025. Find out more at [www.collegechangeseverything.org](http://www.collegechangeseverything.org).

#### About ISAC

The mission of the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) is to help make college accessible and affordable for students throughout Illinois. ISAC provides comprehensive, objective, and timely information on education and financial aid for students and their families--giving them access to the tools they need to make the educational choices that are right for them. Then, through the state scholarship and grant programs ISAC administers, ISAC can help students make those choices a reality. [www.isac.org](http://www.isac.org)

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